

Fall 2003

Dear Parent:

The Idaho Reading Initiative, enacted by the Idaho Legislature, is intended to ensure that all children master the skills they need to become successful readers.

To fully comply with state law, Kindergarten and primary-grade students are tested three times each year: fall, winter, and spring. A test administrator, chosen and trained by your school district, will test students individually using the 10-minute Idaho Reading Indicator (IRI). This pamphlet will help you understand which skills are important at each stage.

Teachers and principals will review your child's test results and will notify you if your child is having difficulty with any of the reading skills.

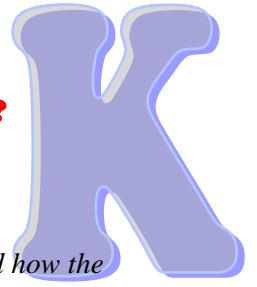
For more information about the IRI, please talk to your child's teacher and principal, or contact us at the State Department of Education. You can call toll-free at 1-800-432-4601, or you can visit our website at www.sde.state.id.us/IRI/

Good reading skills are essential to success in school, and we want to make sure every child can read well. Parents are important partners in this work, and you can help in two ways. First, you can practice the skills described in this pamphlet with your child. Second, you can take time to enjoy reading to, or with, your child every day.

Your interest sends a powerful message to your child: reading is important. Together, we can make sure our youngest readers have the advantage they need as they continue their studies.

Dr. Marilyn Howard
Superintendent of Public Instruction

WHAT ARE KINDERGARTNERS EXPECTED TO KNOW?



FALL SKILLS

Write your name

What does this tell us about reading? It indicates that a student is familiar with some letters and how the letters work together to create words. Letters and words are important building blocks for reading. This is a reading readiness skill.

Detect rhyme

Sample question: Let's play a short word game. In this game, I want you to tell me if two words rhyme. Words that rhyme sound like each other at the end. Listen carefully to these words: hat, cat. Do these words rhyme?

Rhyming shows an awareness of sounds within words. This is an example of phonological awareness and is another reading readiness skill.

Detect syllables

Sample question: Let's play another word game. Listen carefully to the word I say and clap or tap each beat, or syllable, that you hear. Let's practice together.

How many beats, or syllables, do you hear in the word basket? (Two claps or taps.)

How many beats, or syllables, do you hear in do you hear in sun? (One clap or tap.)

Breaking words into syllables is important for word recognition. Being able to tap or clap the number of syllables is a part of phonological awareness.

Identify uppercase letters

Sample question: I want you to name the letters of the alphabet shown below. (The letters will be out of order.) Try to name each letter as quickly as you can.

Alphabet: An essential skill in reading is for the child to learn the names of letters and the sound(s) they represent. This is another reading readiness skill.

WINTER SKILLS

Identify lowercase letters

Alphabet: An essential skill in reading is for the child to learn the names of letters and the sound(s) they represent. Most children learn uppercase letters first and then lowercase letters.

Match the first sound

Sample question: Words can have the same beginning sounds or different beginning sounds. Listen for words that begin the same. Ball and bag begin the same. Ball and dog do not begin the same. Listen to first sound in soap. Which of these words begins with the same sound as soap? Seal, hat, moon

The ability to identify matching first sounds indicates that a child is beginning to understand the unique sounds associated with each letter(s). This demonstrates the beginning development of phoneme awareness.

Generate rhyme

Sample question: I will say rhyming words and then ask you to tell me another word that rhymes with my word. Words that rhyme sound like each other at the end. Listen carefully: hat, cat. Can you tell me another word that rhymes with hat, cat?

The ability to create and say a rhyme demonstrates the development of phonological awareness. This awareness of letters and the sounds they produce will help the child read word families, such as top, shop, chop, quickly and easily.

SPRING SKILLS

Say letters

Students will be asked to identify out-of-order upper- and lowercase letters within a minute.

Students must now quickly identify letters. This is an early fluency skill.

Produce rhyme

Sample question: Let's play a short word game. We are going to make some words that rhyme. Words that rhyme sound like each other at the end. I will give you a word and you say a word that rhymes with it. Snake. What rhymes with snake?

Say the first sound

Sample question: I am going to say a word and show you a picture of the word. Listen carefully and tell me the first sound that you hear in the word.

What is the first sound in fish?

What is the first sound in zipper?

The ability to isolate and say the first sound in a word demonstrates the development of phoneme awareness. When children read, they notice the first letter of a word and use it to begin sounding out the word. Being able to take apart and put back together sounds in words is important for accuracy in both reading and spelling.

Identify a letter, a word, and a sentence & Identify words in a sentence.

Students will be asked to identify which boxes contain a letter, a word, and a sentence. They also will be asked to count the number of words in a sentence.

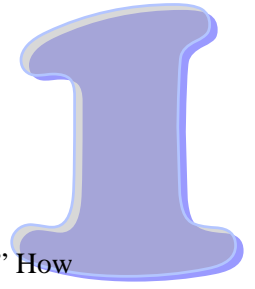
Reading depends on knowing that letters grouped together form words. Words grouped together form sentences. These concepts of print are reading readiness skills.

Read word list

Sample question: Please read this word out loud to me: Mom.

As students learn to read, they will begin to recognize common words by sight. Sight word knowledge impacts the ability to read quickly.

WHAT ARE FIRST-GRADERS EXPECTED TO KNOW?



FALL SKILLS

Identify words

Sample question: I will show you a sentence and ask you a question about it. "The sky is blue." How many words are in the sentence?

Produce rhyme

Sample question: Let's play a short word game. We are going to make some words that rhyme. Words that rhyme sound like each other at the end. I will give you a word and you say a word that rhymes with it. Snake. What rhymes with snake?

Write letters

Sample question: Students are asked to write 13 individual alphabet letters as read by the test administrator.

What does this tell us about reading? Successful readers know how their writing system works. This requires a student to remember letters of the alphabet and to write them.

Read a sentence

Students will be asked to read a short sentence of one-syllable words.

Say the first sound

The ability to isolate and say the first sound in a word demonstrates the development of phoneme awareness. When children read, they notice the first letter of a word and use it to begin sounding out the word. Being able to take apart and put back together sounds in words is important for accuracy in both reading and spelling.

WINTER SKILLS

Blend sounds

Sample question: Sounds can be put together to make words. Listen /t/, /o/ and /p/ make the word "top." Now, you put the sounds together to make a word. What word do the sounds /f/ /i/ /sh/ make? *Successful readers know that sounds are blended together in sequence to make words.*

Read a story

By the middle of first grade, students should know many common words by sight, sound-out grade-level words, and read at a steady pace.

Sound out words

Sample question: Try to read this word. It is not a real word, but look at the word and tell me now it sounds: ab

Good readers can come close to pronouncing words never before seen or heard if the word follows a regular English spelling pattern. Being able to use phonics is an important skill for reading and spelling.

SPRING SKILLS

Read a story

To measure reading accuracy and fluency, students will be timed on how many words they can read aloud correctly in a minute.

Answer comprehension questions

Students will be asked questions about the short story they just read.

Questions about the content of reading passages help to determine whether students understand the meaning of the words and the story.

Sound out words

Sample question: Please read these made-up words. They are not real words. Look at each word and tell how it sounds: ab, reb

What does this tell us about reading? Students should be able to use their knowledge of how letters sound to decode or sound out words they do not know. This skill is often called phonics, and it is also an important skill in spelling.

WHAT ARE SECOND-GRADERS EXPECTED TO KNOW?



FALL SKILLS

Read a story

To measure reading accuracy and fluency, students will be timed on how many words they can read aloud correctly in a minute.

Answer comprehension questions

Students will be asked questions about the short story they just read.

Questions about the content of reading passages help to determine whether students understand the meaning of the words and the story.

Sound out words

Sample question: Please read these made-up words. They are not real words. Look at the word and tell me how it sounds: ub, kam

WINTER SKILLS

Read a story

To measure reading accuracy and fluency, students will be timed on how many words they can read aloud correctly in a minute.

Answer comprehension questions

Students will be asked questions about the short story they just read.

Questions about the content of reading passages help to determine whether students understand the meaning of the words and the story.

Sound out words

Sample question: Please read these made-up words. They are not real words. Look at the word and tell me how it sounds: ib, pef

SPRING SKILLS

Read sight words

What does this tell us about reading? Students should recognize many words by sight without having to sound them out. Efficient word recognition results from phonological awareness and from reading practice.

Read a story

To measure reading accuracy and fluency, students will be timed on how many words they can read aloud correctly in a minute.

Answer comprehension questions

Students will be asked questions about the short story they just read.

Questions about the content of reading passages help to determine whether students understand the meaning of the words and the story.

Sound out words

Sample question: Please read these made-up words. They are not real words. Look at each word and say it the way you think it sounds. Let's practice with these words: ib, pef

WHAT ARE THIRD-GRADERS EXPECTED TO KNOW?



FALL SKILLS

Read sight words

What does this tell us about reading? Students should recognize many words by sight without having to sound them out. Efficient word recognition results from phonological awareness and from reading practice.

Read a story

To measure reading accuracy and fluency, students will be timed on how many words they can read aloud correctly in a minute.

Answer comprehension questions

Students will be asked questions about the short story they just read.

Questions about the content of reading passages help to determine whether students understand the meaning of the words and the story.

WINTER SKILLS

Read sight words

What does this tell us about reading? Students should recognize many words by sight without having to sound them out. Efficient word recognition results from phonological awareness and from reading practice.

Read a story

To measure reading accuracy and fluency, students will be timed on how many words they can read aloud correctly in a minute.

Answer comprehension questions

Students will be asked questions about the short story they just read.

Questions about the content of reading passages help to determine whether students understand the meaning of the words and the story.

Spelling

What does spelling tell us about reading? Spelling indicates that the student can hear a word and successfully translate the sound sequence into the appropriate letter sequence. It also demonstrates visual memory of familiar words.

SPRING SKILLS

Read sight words

What does this tell us about reading? Students should recognize many words by sight without having to sound them out. Efficient word recognition results from phonological awareness and from reading practice.

Read a passage (nonfiction)

To measure reading accuracy and fluency, students will be timed on how many words they can read aloud correctly in a minute.

Answer comprehension questions

Students will be asked questions about the short story they just read.

Questions about the content of reading passages help to determine whether students understand the meaning of the words and the story.

Spelling

What does spelling tell us about reading? Spelling indicates that the student can hear a word and successfully translate the sound sequence into the appropriate letter sequence. It also demonstrates visual memory of familiar words.